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10. — *An Elementary Treatise on Algebra, for the Use of Students in High Schools and Colleges*. By THOMAS SHERWIN, A. M., Principal of the English High School in Boston. Boston : Benjamin B. Mussey. 1842. 12mo. pp. 300.

IF the demand for elementary mathematical books is always to be inferred from the supply, the inhabitants of the Northern States may well be deemed a *calculating* people, in a better sense than that in which the epithet is sometimes applied to them. Numerous text-books on Algebra alone have issued from the press since President Webber's "Course of Mathematics," for a considerable period almost exclusively used in the colleges of New England, gave place to translations from French works. Since that time there has been a gradual advance in this department of education. Better text-books have been introduced, the course of study has become more extensive, and the methods of instruction more thorough and accurate.

Professor Farrar of Cambridge, and the late lamented Warren Colburn of Lowell, deserve to be gratefully remembered as the pioneers of this important reform. Nor does it detract from their claims to gratitude, that, through the aid furnished by them, and in the natural progress of improvement, works better suited than theirs to the purposes of instruction, have been since prepared. Experience has shown, that the Algebra of Euler and that of Lacroix, superior as they are to those which they supplanted, are, notwithstanding, in many parts, ill adapted to the capacities of the young ; and that the inductive method, adopted by Colburn, cannot, in an exact science like Algebra, be advantageously used to so great an extent as it was by him. Most of the more recent treatises on Algebra, designed for the higher order of our literary institutions, seem to us to be too difficult for a large proportion of learners. Nothing tends so much to discourage and prevent mental effort on the part of the pupil, as the constant occurrence of obstacles which he cannot surmount. Every difficulty extrinsic to the science itself, whether arising from faulty arrangement, obscure and imperfect explanations, wide chasms in processes of reasoning, or any other cause, should be carefully guarded against. General principles should be set in as clear a light as possible, and the pupil be made perfectly familiar with one before advancing to another. It is the neglect to do this, which, more than any other cause, renders mathematical studies distasteful and almost useless to no inconsiderable pro-

portion of students in our colleges. The clear perception of truth is always grateful to the mind, and this source of interest alone can safely be relied on to attract and secure the attention of the young, and inspire them with a love of science for its own sake, the only adequate incentive to laborious and profound study. No fears need exist lest their minds should not be sufficiently tasked. Ample scope for their powers will be found in the application of general principles to particular cases, and in mastering the long and abstract demonstrations of the more difficult parts of the science.

Applying the principles just laid down to Mr. Sherwin's treatise, we do not hesitate to say, that it possesses, in an uncommon degree, all the requisites of a good text-book. He is evidently a close observer of the mental operations of the young, and intimately acquainted with the difficulties which they meet with in the study of Algebra. With an intimate knowledge of their wants, which is hardly less important as a qualification for the task he has undertaken, than an accurate acquaintance with the science itself, he unites uncommon skill in communicating the exact information needed, in the precise form in which it is most readily apprehended by them. The difficulties which will be met with in Mr. Sherwin's book, in understanding the principles of Algebra, are inherent in the subject itself, not dependent on his mode of treating it; and these, together with the numerous examples for practice which the work contains, will abundantly task the learner's powers. The author manifests a familiar knowledge of his subject, and his treatise is characterized throughout by sound judgment in the selection and arrangement of its materials, by neatness and precision of expression, and, above all, by a skilful adaptation to the capacities and wants of the class of learners for whom it is designed.

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11. — *Youth ; or, Scenes from the Past, and other Poems.*
By WILLIAM PLUMER, Jr. Boston : Little & Brown.
1841. pp. 144.

THE poems in this volume are chiefly sonnets. A few short pieces in other forms are intermingled. They are a sort of poetical history of the author's life, delineating successively the "scenes of the past," through the various stages of childhood, schoolboy days, entering college, college life and its transitions, graduation, and so on. We opened the volume with some misgivings. Sonnets are not generally the most attrac-